



## EUROPEAN UNION

### 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council Łódź, 1-2 December 2022

#### EU Closing Statement

1. We express our gratitude to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Zbigniew Rau and to the Polish Chairmanship for their hospitality in Łódź, and for the manner they steered the Organisation during unprecedented and turbulent times. We would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Adam Halacinski, and his excellent team in Vienna for their tireless efforts throughout this most challenging year for the OSCE region and for the Organisation itself.
2. For anyone sitting in the plenary, following online, or participating in the various side events, and in the Parallel Civil Society Conference the message was resoundingly clear: The overwhelming majority of participating States unequivocally condemned Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine with Belarus' complicity, as a gross violation of international law, the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments, and as the most critical threat to our common security since the end of World War II. We will continue to support Ukraine to defend its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders for as long as it takes. We remain determined to support Ukraine's resilience and reconstruction, especially in the wake of Russia's continued indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians and civilian objects and infrastructure.
3. Equally resounding was the call to ensure accountability for the heinous acts committed during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The toll in civilian lives is appalling and poses a fundamental challenge for all of us who believe in the respect for international law, and OSCE principles and commitments. The

European Union is steadfast in its commitment to ensure there is no impunity for the crimes committed, including torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, sexual and gender-based violence as well as unlawful deportations, and we will support all efforts, including within the OSCE, to ensure justice for victims. The OSCE Moscow Mechanisms reports are a crucial tool in this regard.

4. During this Ministerial, it was also reaffirmed that Russia's and Belarus' external aggression is mirrored by a systematic and drastic internal repression against their own populations. We reiterate our call on Belarus to refrain from any further involvement in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, to stop the orchestrated repression and intimidation campaign, to release all those arbitrarily detained and political prisoners, to respect media freedom and civil society and start an inclusive national dialogue. Likewise, we once again call on Russia to reverse the legislation used for the ongoing repression against and persecution of its citizens, and to act in accordance with the spirit and letter of all its OSCE commitments.
5. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has hampered all OSCE conflict resolution mechanisms, thus making our region more unstable. The EU will continue to support the OSCE resolution processes and will remain actively engaged in the discussions. We urge all parties to conflicts, as well as all participants in the conflict resolution formats, to engage constructively in good faith and to implement their respective commitments. Political will is key to achieving progress in making our region more stable, prosperous and peaceful.
6. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its people, and its cross-dimensional and cross-regional consequences have dominated the discussions and overshadowed the outcomes traditionally expected from a Ministerial Council. At the same time, the value of the OSCE as an important and inclusive regional platform for security and cooperation has been reaffirmed. In the months ahead, we should use its tools and assets in all three dimensions of security, in particular to address the multifaceted consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its destabilising actions in the whole OSCE

region, grounded in our common OSCE commitments and our renewed determination to implement them.

7. We commend the Civic Solidarity Platform for organising its Parallel Civil Society Conference and value its contribution for the Ministerial Council formulated in the Łódź Declaration. Civil society is essential for ensuring functioning and vibrant democracies, and we therefore remain firm in safeguarding the openness and inclusivity of the OSCE towards civil society organisations.
8. The EU reiterates its firm support for the OSCE Secretary General, the Secretariat and the other executive structures, including the field operations, as well as for the autonomous institutions and their Heads. It is our common responsibility to preserve the institutions and their strong mandates, and ensure their proper functioning, including adequate financial means. In the same vein, the EU will continue to work closely with the current and incoming Chairs to support and safeguard the valuable work of OSCE field operations. We also look forward to our continued fruitful cooperation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as with the OSCE Partners for cooperation.
9. We look forward to working with the incoming Chairpersonship-in-Office of North Macedonia. We will support North Macedonia and its goal to lead the Organisation and all participating States to a renewed focus on respect for the fundamental principles of the OSCE. This will help us ensure that the OSCE remains a key forum for meaningful dialogue on the unprecedented challenges to European security we currently face.
10. To conclude, the crisis we confront is neither a flaw in the rules and underlying principles of the European security order nor a failure of the OSCE itself—it is the failure of one participating State, actively supported by another one, to abide by those rules and principles. The solution is clear: just as Russia's destructive and illegal actions have afflicted immense human suffering, tried to upend the rules-based international order and damaged Russia's credibility, Russia can choose a different course and take different actions—beginning by immediately bringing its war against Ukraine to an end, completely and unconditionally

withdrawing all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and by implementing its international obligations. No one benefits from Russia's actions. Not the Russian people. Not the people of neighbouring countries. Not the people of Europe and of the entire OSCE area. Only when all 57 participating States play by the rules we have all willingly agreed upon and uphold universal values and principles, we can achieve a common, indivisible security space built on trust and cooperation and at peace.

I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's Ministerial Council meeting.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, the Potential Candidate Country BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO, and the OSCE Partner for Cooperation AUSTRALIA align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.